

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

LETTER

FROM

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,

IN RESPONSE

*To Senate resolution of February 13, 1893, relative to the condition of the Busch building.*

FEBRUARY 16, 1893.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
*Washington, D. C., February 15, 1893.*

Hon. LEVI P. MORTON,  
*Vice-President, and President of the Senate:*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of the resolution of the Senate dated February 13, 1893, as follows:

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
*February 13, 1893.*

*Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Treasury and the Postmaster-General be requested to transmit to the Senate forthwith copies of any correspondence which may be on file in their respective Departments relating to the alleged unsafe condition of the Busch building, occupied by the money-order branch of the Sixth Auditor's office, caused by overloading the floors of said building, and what action has been taken to protect the persons employed therein from danger. Also, to report upon the advisability of transferring the Sixth Auditor's office to a safe fireproof structure, and using the Busch building for such bureaus or divisions of the Post Office Department as may be deemed desirable.

Attest:

ANSON G. MCCOOK,  
*Secretary.*

In reply I beg to transmit herewith copies of all the correspondence on file in this Department upon the subject in question, embracing the following:

- (1) President Board of Commissioners, D. C., to the Postmaster-General, February 3.
- (2) Postmaster-General to Secretary of the Treasury, same date.
- (3) Secretary of the Treasury to Postmaster-General, February 7.
- (4) Schulze & Goenner, architects, to general agent Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association, February 7.
- (5) Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association to Postmaster-General, February 8.
- (6) First Assistant Postmaster-General to Supervising Architect.
- (7) First Assistant Postmaster-General to Architect of the Capitol, February 8.

- (8) Postmaster-General to Acting Supervising Architect, February 8.
- (9) Postmaster-General to Secretary of the Treasury, February 9.
- (10) General agent Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association to First Assistant Postmaster-General, February 9.
- (11) Secretary of the Treasury to Postmaster-General, February 9.
- (12) Acting Supervising Architect to First Assistant Postmaster-General, February 11.
- (13) Report of the chief of the computing division, Supervising Architect's office, to Acting Supervising Architect, February 11.

It appears from the reports of the building inspector and of the Supervising Architect's office that the building known as the Busch building is not in an unsafe or dangerous condition, but that there was simply overloading in a few places, which has been remedied by the removal of the weighty matter.

The resolution asks me also to report upon the advisability of the transfer of the Sixth Auditor's office to a safe fireproof structure, and using the Busch building for other bureaus or divisions of the Post-Office Department as may be deemed desirable.

I beg to state that while, as appears from the above-mentioned reports, there seems to be no question of the safety and capacity of the building, the volume of the money-order business is so great that very large accumulations of papers causing heavy weights are rapidly being added.

Without making any recommendation, I respectfully transmit herewith a proposition from the agent of the Union building, on G street, between Sixth and Seventh streets, the lower portion of which is now used for the city post-office, and would state that if Congress should deem it advisable that some portion of the force be removed from the main Post-Office Department building, now much overcrowded, to the Busch building, the Sixth Auditor's force in the latter building could be suitably housed in the Union building.

Very respectfully,

JNO. WANAMAKER,  
*Postmaster-General.*

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,  
*Washington, February 3, 1893.*

SIR: Representations have been made to the Commissioners that the building on E street between Seventh and Eighth streets NW. called the Busch building, and occupied as offices of your Department, is hazardously overloaded by the records which are stored in it.

The inspector of buildings of the District has examined the building and advised the superintendent and disbursing clerk of your Department that it should be partially relieved of the weight imposed upon it.

It has been further reported to the Commissioners that the walls of the building are so affected by the weight they sustain as to be in a dangerous condition, but the inspector of buildings who has made an examination of these walls reports that they are secure. The complainant, however, appears not to be fully assured by the inspector's report that the building is in a safe condition. Furthermore, under the building regulations of the District, the official surveillance of the inspector of buildings is excepted from buildings "owned by or under the sole control of officers of the United States."

The Commissioners, therefore, are of the opinion that an examination and report by the Architect of the Capitol would be more satisfactory as well as more authoritative than that of the inspector of buildings, and suggest that a report by said architect be obtained by your Department.

Very respectfully,

JNO. W. DOUGLASS,  
*President Board of Commissioners, District of Columbia.*

Hon. JOHN WANAMAKER,  
*Postmaster-General.*

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
Washington, D. C., February 3, 1893.

SIR: I beg to call your attention to within letter from the president of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, in reference to the Busch building occupied by the Sixth Auditor of the Treasury, complaining that it was overloaded and suggesting that an investigation be made by the official architect. I refer the matter to you for such action as you see proper. No complaint, so far as I know, has ever been lodged in this Department.

Very respectfully,

JNO. WANAMAKER,  
Postmaster-General.

The SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,  
Washington, D. C., February 7, 1893.

SIR: I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 3d instant, inclosing letter dated February 3, 1893, addressed to you by Mr. J. W. Douglass, president of the Board of Commissioners, District of Columbia, in regard to the Busch building, occupied by the Sixth Auditor of the Treasury, complaining that it is overloaded, and suggesting that an investigation be made by the official architect, and stating that you refer the matter to this Department for such action as may seem proper, as no complaint, so far as you are informed, has ever been lodged with your Department.

It is observed from Mr. Douglass's letter addressed to you that he recites the circumstances upon which certain questions as to the safe condition of said building have been based, and it is also observed that Mr. Douglass states that the Commissioners of the District of Columbia are of the opinion (in view of the fact that under the building regulations of the District the official surveillance of the inspector of buildings is excepted from buildings "owned by or under the sole control of officers of the United States") that an examination and report by the Architect of the Capitol would be more satisfactory as well as more authoritative than that of the inspector of buildings, and suggest that a report by said Architect be obtained.

As the Commissioners recommend that the examination and report in the case be made by the Architect of the Capitol, I return herewith said letter dated February 3, 1893, addressed to you by Mr. Douglass, and have to ask whether you do not deem it advisable to have the recommendation made by the Commissioners, referred to in said communication, strictly complied with, and to have the examination and report made by the Architect of the Capitol.

If, however, it is deemed necessary, there will be no objection to an examination and report being made by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department.

Respectfully, yours,

CHARLES FOSTER.  
Secretary.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 7, 1893.

SIR: Agreeably to your request we have examined the Busch building in regard to its safety.

We found that some of the office floors are at present strained to the utmost, especially the rooms in fourth floor, where the so-called omnibus cases are placed and run on iron tracks forward and back.

This immense moving weight (there are 20 omnibuses in one room, each weighing about 1,000 pounds) has so weakened and sagged the floor joists that no calculation as to their present strength can be made, and if those floors are not relieved soon of the present strain a terrible catastrophe will be the result.

Besides the rooms containing the omnibuses, the northwest corner room on fourth floor, and the entire middle and rear rooms of first story are also overloaded, and considering that every week about 2 tons of paper are taken in and none taken out the effect of it must be detrimental to the building.

Since the weight has to be reduced on such floors, which have sagged considerably, we would recommend that all heavy cases be removed to the first floor into such rooms which could receive additional support by girders and posts from the basement.

In answer to your question about the damage to the building we have to state that some of the floors can only be brought back to a level by taking up the sub and top floors and striking additional floor joists against the present ones after they have been propped up to a level.

The top flooring of many rooms is completely ruined by the moving of the heavy cases.

The sagging of the floors necessitates an overhauling of all washboards (bases) in the building.

Also the damaged plastering of the building should be repaired at once.

All the walls of the building are in good condition and have not suffered by the overloading of the floors, which is a proof that the building is properly constructed.

The estimate to repair the building, with the exception of leveling the sagged floors, is \$925. This does not include any moving of cases.

To repair the damage in order to bring the building in the same condition as before occupation will be a difficult matter to estimate unless the sub and top floors are removed and the joists examined.

Very respectfully,

SCHULZE & GOENNER,  
*Architects.*

Mr. CARL CONRAD,  
*General Agent for Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 8, 1893.

SIR: We inclose to you a report, dated February 7, made by Messrs. Schulze & Goenner, architects of this city, and who were the architects for the building known as the "Busch building," and now occupied by the Money Order Division of your Department. This report speaks for itself and needs no comment on our part. There can be no question that it is imperatively necessary that you take immediate action to prevent accident or indeed catastrophe. The report of the architects is so strong that not a moment's time should be lost in removing the cause of danger, and occupying the basement and lower floor with what has brought about this condition of things. The repairing of the building is a question that we would like to consult with you personally as soon as possible, within the next twenty-four hours. We will bring the architects with us, so as to go over the whole ground and do whatever may be necessary in the premises and satisfactory to the Department at the same time, to prevent any liability, on our part, by any inattention on the part of the Government itself.

Very truly,

ANHEUSER-BUSCH B. A.,  
CARL CONRAD, *G. Agt.*

Hon. JOHN WANAMAKER,  
*Postmaster-General, City.*

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
*Washington.*

SIR: The Postmaster-General requested the honorable Secretary of the Treasury some days since to send a competent man to inspect the Anheuser-Busch building occupied by this Department as to its security, owing to a question being raised as to its security for occupancy by employes. The Sixth Auditor has dismissed his force until the building can be inspected. May I ask when you can do us the favor to send inspector,

Very respectfully,

H. CLAY EVANS,  
*First Assistant Postmaster-General.*

W. J. EDEROKE, Esq.,  
*Supervising Architect, Treasury Department.*

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
*Washington, February 8, 1893.*

ARCHITECT OF CAPITOL: A question has arisen about the safety of the Anheuser-Busch building, occupied by this Department.

The Postmaster-General would be pleased if you would have a competent man come and inspect the building and settle the question as to its safety.

H. CLAY EVANS,  
*First Assistant Postmaster-General.*

[Telegram.]

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT, February 8, 1893.

JAMES P. LOW,  
Acting Supervising Architect, Treasury:

Answering your telegram, I do not understand that the Post-Office Department has any relation with the Architect of the Capitol that gives it a right to ask any service by him. As the Sixth Auditor of the Treasury and all the clerical force are appointed by the Treasury Department, perhaps the Secretary of the Treasury will feel, as their lives are in jeopardy if the Commissioners' report is true, that in the interest of safety it would be better for the Supervising Architect's office to take the matter up. I only submit this with great respect.

JNO. WANAMAKER,  
Postmaster-General.

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
Washington, D. C., February 9, 1893.

DEAR SIR: Replying to your letter of the 9th, received by messenger, informing me that Mr. Coulter, the Sixth Auditor, had dismissed his force until Monday next, because of information he had received from the architect of the owners of the Busch building, I beg to say that I have no control of the Sixth Auditor's movements, and since the interference of the Secretary of the Treasury last spring have not insisted on directing the use of the Busch building, not because I admitted any right of other control, but because I did not want to have any strife between this Department and yours. If Mr. Coulter, who looks to you for direction in regard to the use of the rooms of the building occupied by the Auditor of the Department, overloads portions of it, I do not know that I should be expected to take any responsibility in the matter. So soon as the complaint of the architect came to my attention I referred it to you under date of the 4th instant, that the Supervising Architect might examine it, if you so determined. On the reply of the Supervising Architect that, in his judgment, it was a matter for the Architect of the Capitol, the subject was promptly referred to him.

It seems rather odd that you should ask me to energetically look into the use of a building that you have prevented me from occupying, and in which you have encouraged the Sixth Auditor to ignore the Post-Office Department, that under the law is the lessor of the building. This Department has no relation to any of the architects of the Government, and having brought the matter before the Supervising Architect through you, and before the Architect of the Capitol, in the interest of humanity, I can not see that I have any other duty in the premises.

Very respectfully,

JNO. WANAMAKER,  
Postmaster-General.

Hon. CHARLES FOSTER,  
Secretary of the Treasury.

ANHEUSER-BUSCH BREWING ASSOCIATION,  
Washington, D. C., February 9, 1893.

DEAR SIR: I leave town to-day, but will return Saturday morning, and will call on you at about 11 o'clock a. m. in reference to the Busch building.

Yours, very truly

CARL CONRAD,  
General Agent, Anheuser-Busch Brewing Association.

H. C. EVANS, Esq.,  
First Assistant Postmaster-General, Post-Office Department, City.

[Telegram.]

WASHINGTON, February 9, 1893.

Hon. JOHN WANAMAKER:

Received by reference from the Acting Supervising Architect your telegram 9th instant, and considering it in connection with statement orally made by Sixth Auditor this morning I have requested the Acting Supervising Architect to cause an examination and report as to condition of Busch building to be made as soon as possible.

CHAS. FOSTER,  
Secretary.



TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISING ARCHITECT,  
*Washington, D. C., February 11, 1893.*

SIR: Referring to your telegram of the 8th instant, I have the honor to transmit herewith report of Mr. F. W. Pease, chief computer of this office, who has examined the Busch building, located on E street, between Seventh and Eighth streets, this city, occupied by the Sixth Auditor's office.

I have carefully read the report, and concur in the views expressed therein. Copy of the report has also been sent to the Sixth Auditor.

Respectfully, yours,

JAMES P. LOW,  
*Acting Supervising Architect.*

HON. H. CLAY EVANS,  
*First Assistant Postmaster-General,  
United States Post-Office Department, Washington, D. C.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISING ARCHITECT,  
*Washington, D. C., February 11, 1893.*

SIR: In response to your request of the 9th instant, I visited the Busch Building, situated on E street between Seventh and Eighth, occupied by the Sixth Auditor's office of this Department, for the purpose of examination as to the overloading of floors, etc. Mr. Stutz, the chief draftsman of this office, accompanied me.

The structure is of brick, six stories high, with basement, and having floors framed of wood.

Mr. Schulze, the architect of the building, has kindly furnished drawings and specifications for the building for the purpose of examination, and has stated that the building was commenced and completed within five months.

Referring to the drawings and specifications for the work, it is found that the average span of the floor joists for a room equals 19 feet, and to the specification the joists are to be of merchantable Virginia pine, 3 by 12, spaced 16 inches on centers and cross-bridged every 5 feet of span.

The specification for the work does not require the floor joists to be crowned, and in examining the work at the building it was observed that the floors have dropped away from the base skirting of rooms from  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. This was undoubtedly on account of the use of unseasoned lumber. In entering rooms the deflection of floor was apparent.

In certain rooms there has been an overloading of the floors, and in several instances a deflection of floor joists, causing plastering to crack and fall from ceilings of rooms underneath. This deflection has not impaired the stability of the structure, but demonstrates that great care should be taken in future loading. The excessive load on the floors should be at once removed, and that being done the building, in my judgment, will be perfectly safe for usual office purposes.

In applying future loads it is recommended that the same be placed, in every instance, at right angles to the line of floor joists and in all cases against the walls. The heavy file cases of sheet steel, the smaller ones weighing 700 pounds, in which less than 500 pounds of files are placed, should be removed to the lower floors of the building. Should it not, however, be practicable to place the heavy file cases at right angles with the line of the floor joists, additional supports should be provided, by means of girders and posts, from the cellar up.

Respectfully, yours,

F. W. PEASE,  
*Chief, Computing Division.*

HON. JAMES P. LOW,  
*Acting Supervising Architect.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 15, 1893.*

SIR: In view of the statements in the public press that the Busch building is overloaded and change made necessary in locating valuable records, I desire to suggest the advisability of moving the money-order division of the Sixth Auditor's office to the Union building and transferring to the Busch building some other divisions of the auditor's office now located in the Post-Office Department, which would not require the constant use of the various floors for tons of records and documents.

The Union building covers about 21,000 feet of ground, and as you inspected and approved of the plans before deciding to locate the city post-office there, it is hardly necessary to state to you that it is strictly fireproof and capable of carrying heavy loads on any floor. The rear half of a well-lighted basement, containing about 9,000 square feet of floor space, would provide storage room for records and documents not in constant use, and ample accommodation for the entire Money Order Division, with the current records would be provided on one of the upper floors. Three large elevators for use of passengers and freight would make the basement convenient of access.

I offer one floor and the rear half of the basement for \$10,000 per annum, that being substantially the same rate as is now paid by the city post-office. I will also agree to move the Money Order Division from the Busch building to the Union building without cost to the Government.

Yours, respectfully,

FRANK B. CONGER,  
*Agent Union Building Company.*

HON. JOHN WANAMAKER,  
*Postmaster-General, Washington, D. C.*



